

HOUSE BILL 3093
By Winningham

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to certified athletic trainers in high schools.

WHEREAS, athletic activities are an integral part of the high school experience for many students; and

WHEREAS, the health and safety of school athletes are major concerns for school systems, coaches, and parents; and

WHEREAS, every school's goal is to prevent any student from being injured during high school athletic events or in practice; and

WHEREAS, with more and more students participating in athletic events, and coaches and teachers bearing increasing workloads, athletic injuries are more likely to occur; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that school systems make every effort to prevent injuries, and should injuries occur, it is essential that schools be in a position to address these injuries immediately and appropriately; and

WHEREAS, the American Medical Consortium recommends the use of athletic trainers in all high school athletic programs; and

WHEREAS, certified athletic trainers are medical professionals who specialize in the comprehensive care of athletes and treatment of injuries; and

WHEREAS, since athletic training and practice sessions for most sports have become more strenuous and demanding, certified athletic trainers can provide valuable educational assistance and training, and thus reduce the potential for injuries, especially for athletes playing multiple sports; and

WHEREAS, certified athletic trainers working in the public high schools can assess the severity of an injury and immediately implement intervention that can dramatically reduce recovery time; and

WHEREAS, the presence of an on-site certified athletic trainer can significantly reduce out-of-pocket costs for both the school system and the athlete; and

WHEREAS, certified athletic trainers can also provide immediate assessment and assistance to students incurring injuries at school in physical education or non-athletic activities; and

WHEREAS, certified athletic trainers can assist in the instruction of lifetime wellness for all students and facilitate community workshops for citizens interested in athletic safety; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. There is established a two-year pilot program to provide certified athletic trainers in public high schools. The pilot program shall be implemented by the department of education in conjunction with LEAs. The pilot program shall be established in three (3) high schools in East Tennessee with one (1) high school in the Knox County LEA, one (1) in the Washington County or Johnson City LEAs, one (1) in the Scott County or Oneida City LEAs and one (1) high school in each of the other two (2) grand divisions. In implementing the pilot program, the department of education shall choose high schools that financially support the program and will commit to partnerships with groups of orthopedic physicians that will furnish supervision of the certified athletic trainers and financial or in-kind donations to the program.

SECTION 2. The goals of the certified athletic trainer pilot program shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) Placement of one (1) full-time certified athletic trainer in each participating high school;

- (2) Equipment of training and treatment facilities in each participating high school to provide rehabilitation and physical therapy;
- (3) Provision of summer training programs for teachers, coaches, and trainers;
- (4) Provision of at least three (3) community workshops each year for the public on athletic safety and other appropriate topics;
- (5) Development of plans for providing coverage by a certified athletic trainer for all varsity athletic events, and, if possible, at other athletic events;
- (6) Enhancement of communication and quality of care by establishing working relationships with teams, community physicians, parents, and coaches;
- (7) Maintenance of records documenting all injuries and rehabilitation procedures; and
- (8) Maintenance of documentation of pilot program services.

SECTION 3. Each LEA with schools participating in the pilot program shall report its findings and conclusions concerning the efficacy of the program and any recommendations to the department of education at the conclusion of each school year in which the pilot program is implemented. Each year, the department shall compile and report its findings, conclusions, and recommendations concerning the pilot program to the education committees of the senate and the house of representatives and to the state board of education.

SECTION 4. Implementation of the provisions of this act shall be contingent on and subject to funding being specifically provided for such purpose within the general appropriations act.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.